



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 2 May 1968



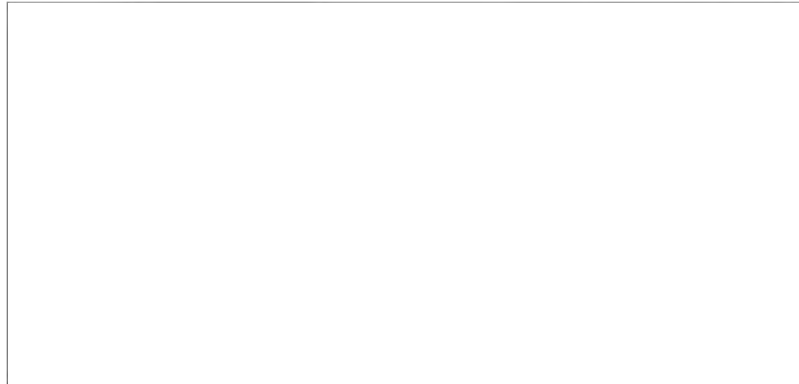
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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
2 MAY 1968

LATE ITEM

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Gulf of Tonkin



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1. South Vietnam

The National Liberation Front is trying to line up some reputable Catholics for the new Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces--the organization which the Communists evidently intend ultimately to use as part of the "coalition government" they have in mind for the South.

2. South Korea

Security efforts are being speeded up in the wake of Tuesday night's terrorist bombings in Seoul. The defense minister, referring to the "growing threat" from the North, announced that he expects larger terrorist raids.

The Pak government will surely get all the mileage it can out of the latest incidents in an attempt to silence opposition criticism of pending new security legislation.

3. Middle East

The big Israeli parade in Jerusalem got under way on schedule at about 4:00 AM, Washington time. So far, we have heard of no serious incidents. Jerusalem itself is under such tight security wraps that it is hard to see how any trouble could develop there. The Arabs everywhere, however, are so enraged at the provocative Israeli action that outbreaks of violence could easily be touched off at any of a number of places.

Amman is particularly vulnerable, especially if the well-armed Arab terrorist groups have slipped into the city. Also, border incidents along the Jordan River have been on the upswing in recent days and may well get worse.

4. Philippines

President Marcos is in a bad slump, politically [redacted] He remains [redacted] preoccupied by the six-week-old scandal involving the secret training camp for anti-Malaysian guerrillas on Corregidor. He feels he has already used up about all his political capital in an effort just to stem the continuing erosion of his influence on the home front.

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The President is likely eventually to regain his old fire, but in the meantime the administration is close to paralysis. The measure to extend financing for the Filipino civic action team in Vietnam is one temporary casualty.

5. Soviet Union

May Day in Moscow was uninspiring. The speeches were dull and no new weapons were shown in the parade.

6. Poland

The country's most eminent actress, Ida Kaminska, tells Ambassador Gronouski that she and her family want to emigrate to the US. The world renowned 69-year-old star, who is a Jew, explained frankly that the government's anti-Semitic campaign prompted her decision.

The ambassador is preparing for a flood of similar requests from other talented and able Polish Jews.

7. Panama

General Vallarino laid it on the line on Monday to a couple of Arias supporters who were pleading for National Guard neutrality in the 12 May elections. Arias will not be permitted to win, he said [redacted]

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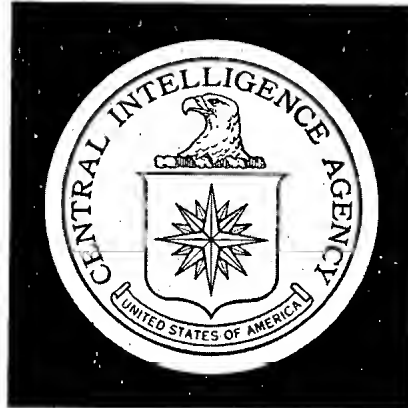
8. Chile

President Frei is about to be faced with a new upsurge of strikes for higher wages. Some government workers--postal and telegraph employees and teachers--have already been on strike for more than a month. The Communists are now promoting a series of 24-hour industry-by-industry walkouts for the coming weeks. The idea is to pressure congress to modify a pending wage bill.

Even military personnel are agitating for more pay--which raises doubt about how effective they will be if ordered to counter the labor agitation.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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2 May 1968

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

2 May 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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Comments by Dobrynin: Ambassador Dobrynin told Deputy Under Secretary Bohlen the other day that the North Vietnamese had been so confident that Warsaw would be acceptable to the US that they had even sent to the Polish Government the list of the delegation they were prepared to send to the first meeting. Bohlen asked Dobrynin what was the name of their chief delegate, and he replied that it was a "three-barreled" Vietnamese name which he could not remember.

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Chinese Delegation in Hanoi: A Chinese delegation was in Hanoi last week to discuss the question of North Vietnamese talks with the US.

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Ambassador Sullivan reports also hearing a second-hand report from a Soviet officer that Hanoi was making an effort to "mend fences" with Peking on the matter of negotiations and that as of 17 April the North Vietnamese were talking to the Chinese at an unspecified location.

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May Day Celebrations: Virtually the entire North Vietnamese leadership turned out for May Day celebrations, according to Hanoi Radio (International Service in English), even "healthy and smiling" Ho Chi Minh. The only Politburo members absent were Pham Hung (whom a high-level Viet Cong defector has recently told us is directing the war in the South), party organizer Le Duc Tho, and government economic expert Le Thanh Nghi. The speeches were routine, with trade union leader Huong Quoc Viet delivering the main speech.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing significant to report.

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